MEMO FROM MARSHA E. BARNES

undated

1977

I was assigned to Embassy Georgetown from July 1973 until August 1975. I had limited contact with the Peoples Temple in the course of my official duties as Vice Consul. I recall speaking with Paula Adams on more than one occasion in 1974, but I could not characterize my contacts as frequent. During those conversations I learned that the group which called itself the Peoples' Temple Agricultural Mission had some affiliation with the Disciples of Christ, and was based in California. I encouraged the group to register with the Embassy. There was notable reluctance to do this. I explained the advantages and explained that the information would not be made available to other government agencies or individuals. The People's Temple agreed to register. It was agreed that as a matter of convenience members would not be required to appear personally in order to register. I provided a number of registration cards to Ms. Adams. I urged that the group be certain to act in accordance with Government of Guyana regulations. I mentioned the need to be careful about any land grants, leases or concessions as I had heard of possible problems with overlapping grants arising from faulty surveying.

The weekend of July 13, 1974, I traveled to Matthews Ridge in the company of another Embassy officer, an official of the Guyanese Ministry of

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Agriculture and an Israeli citrus fruit expert. I traveled to the Northwest to familiarize myself with that area and view two settlements of Americans in that area. I felt that any grouping of Americans held a potential for Consular work, or problems, and that the more I knew the better able I would be to discharge my duties. My visit to the People's Temple clearing was very brief. Reports submitted at the time indicate that there were nine Americans living near Port Kaituma (there was no settlement; rather a clearing; it was not called Jonestown). The group was making progress in clearing the forest, although only a small area had been cleared. It was a racially mixed group. The people appeared earnest, well organized and well financed.

During my assignment in Guyana, to my knowledge there were no allegations of mistreatment or bondage involving the Peoples Temple. There was a service conducted by the Rev. Jim Jones at the Roman Catholic Sacred Heart Church which turned into a so-called faith-healing service. I believe this took place in the six months prior to my departure in 8/75.